

THE ETYMOLOGY OF ARM. *t'oyn* «VENOM»

Indo-European **(s)pyū-* «spit», no doubt inceptively onomatopoeic, has a wide range of reflexes, among them being Gk. πτύω «spit», Skt. *(ni)ṣṭhivati*¹, Lith. *spiduti*², and Arm. *t'k'anem* «id», *t'uk'* «spittle». That Arm. *t'* can parallel Gk. πτ- is further reinforced by Arm. *t'er* «side», Gk. πτερών «wing». A variety of suffixes can be added to the root **(s)pyū-*. Gk. πτύοις «spitting», and πτύσμα «spittle» show an extension in **-s*; Av. *spāma-* «spittle» shows an **-m* while Lat. *spuō* «spit» shows zero. Arm. *t'uk'* and *t'k'anem* may reflect a suffix of either **-s* or **-k*³.

I would like to bring Arm. *t'oyn* «venom» into this isogloss, derived from the full grade of IE **(s)pyū-* with an **-n* extension: **(s)pyeū-n*. The semantic support is provided from the folk belief that snakes could «spit» their venom. The Bible attests as follows: (*Romans* 3.13) «T'oynk' ižic' i nerk'oy šrt'anc' noc'a» («The venom of snakes is under their lips»); and we also note (*James* 3.8) that the tongue is «zč'arn ew zankarg ew zli t'unawk' mahaberin» («evil, disorderly, and full of death bearing venom»).

Thus it would seem likely that *t'oyn* «venom» can be brought into the isogloss containing *t'uk'* «spittle» and *t'k'anem* «spit». The semantic accord, through inference, supports the concept of venom being spat, and the array of IE suffixes added to **(s)pyū-* reinforces the contention that an **-n* can be added to the root. Further, this final *-n* need not be of IE origin at all but, rather, similar to the suffixal *-n*, semantically empty, of such nouns as *muk-n* «mouse» and *ak-n* «eye».

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¹ Skt. *(ni)ṣṭhivati* presumably shows dissimilation of an original *p...v* to *t...v*. W. Schulze (KZ 45, 1912, pp. 95-6 = *Kl. Schr.* 56-57) cannot support this with internal Sanskrit evidence, but does refer to the dissimilation of *b...p* to *d...p* seen in the Greek proper name Σαρδανάπαλλος from Assyrian Ašurbānapi. Further, in Swiss German, [*štūw*] and [*špūw*] «spittle» are in free variation. R. Hiersche discusses the problem of aspiration in *Untersuchungen zur Frage der Tenuis Aspiratae im Indogermanischen*, Wiesbaden 1964, pp. 133-134.

² K. Būga (*Rinktiniai Raštai*, Vilnius 1958-62, II.24) attempts to make further comparisons with Lith. *piduti* «cut, mow down» and *biarūs* «frightful».

³ For further discussion of the suffix of *t'uk'*, see my article in *REArm* VIII, pp. 1-4.